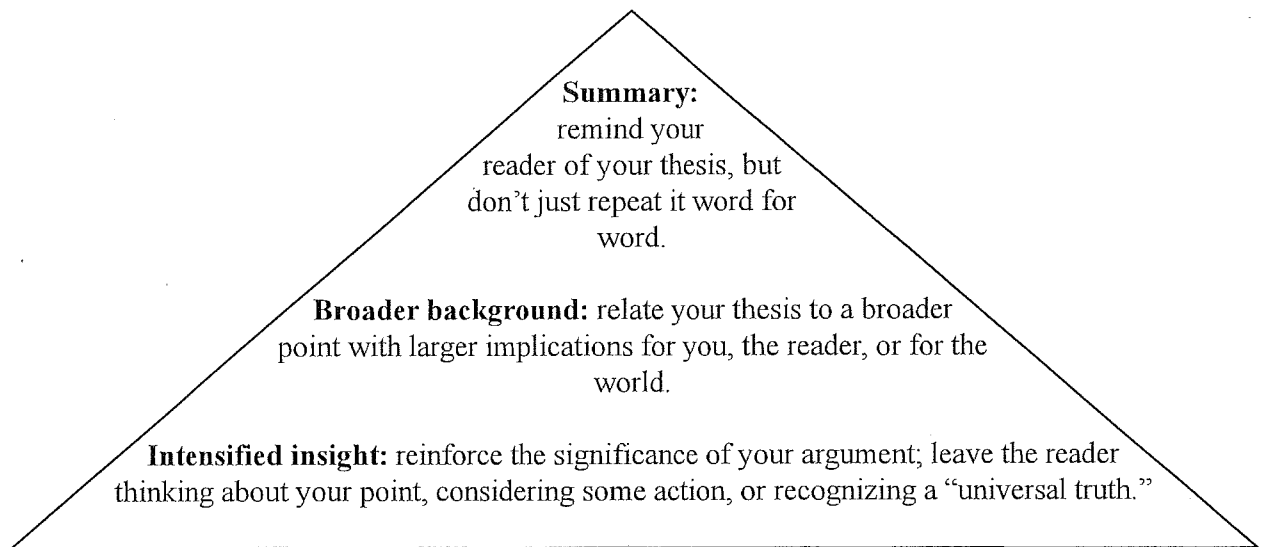


## What Is a Conclusion?

In the concluding paragraph, you wrap things up and leave your reader with something to think about. It is the place to say “good-bye” gracefully. A common way to represent a conclusion is to invert the introduction triangle so the narrow end, representing your specific focal point (your thesis), is on top and the wide end, representing significant implications to the greater society, is at the bottom.



While the introduction is the place to hook your reader, establish a tone and background knowledge, and assert your point, the conclusion is the place to reinforce your point and help the reader to understand why it matters in the grand scheme of things (answering the “so what?”).

It is often effective to create a “circle” between your introduction and conclusion—a circle that connects the conclusion back to where you started in the introduction. For example, if you introduce a powerful image or metaphor in the introduction, continue with the image or metaphor in the conclusion. If you start with a quotation or dialogue in the introduction, revisit it again in the conclusion by extending it, paraphrasing it, or using part of it again. The reader experiences a sense of coherence when you tie the conclusion back to the introduction.

## Closing Sentence Techniques: Leaving a Reader Fulfilled

A good conclusion wraps up an essay in a memorable and powerful way. In doing so, a strong conclusion reminds readers of the gist of the essay and leaves them feeling that they know a good deal more than when they began. Effective strategies for concluding an essay include vivid images, quotations, and calls for action.

### Concluding With a Vivid Image

It is, in any case, finally that I end up having to trust not to laugh, not to snicker. Even as you regard me in these lines, I try to imagine your face as you read. You who read “Aria,” especially those of you with your theme-divining yellow felt pen poised in your hand, you for whom this essay is yet another “assignment,” please do not forget that it is my life I am handing you in these pages—memories that are as personal for me as family photographs in an old cigar box.

—RICHARD RODRIGUEZ

from a postscript to *Aria: A Memoir of a Bilingual Childhood*

### Concluding With a Quotation

Despite the celebrity that accrued to her and the air of awesomeness with which she was surrounded in her later years, Miss Keller retained an unaffected personality, certain that her optimistic attitude toward life was justified. “I believe that all through these dark and silent years God has been using my life for a purpose I do not know,” she said. “But one day I shall understand and then I will be satisfied.”

—ALDEN WHITMAN

*Helen Keller: June 27, 1880–June 1, 1968*

### Concluding With a Call for Action

It is now almost 40 years since the invention of nuclear weapons. We have not yet experienced a global thermonuclear war—although on more than one occasion we have come tremulously close. I do not think our luck can hold forever. Men and machines are fallible, as recent events remind us. Fools and madmen do exist, and sometimes rise to power. Concentrating always on the near future, we have ignored the long-term consequences of our actions. We have placed our civilization and species in jeopardy.

Fortunately, it is not yet too late. We can safeguard the planetary civilization and the human family if we so choose. There is no more important or urgent issue.

—CARL SAGAN

*The Nuclear Winter*

The concluding paragraph provides the last opportunity for you to impress the message of an essay on your readers’ minds and to create effects you desire. As such, it is well worth your time and effort.